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## CITY OF SAINT PAUL

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### Como Regional Park Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, June 14, 2016

**Committee Members present:** *Dan Marckel, Jenny Larson, Elizabeth Stiffler, Richard Herriges and Brad Meyer. Absent: Triesta Brown, Kim Johnson*

Paul Prior, Parks and Rec. Special Services & Karin Misiewicz, Parks and Recreation Operations joined us for the meeting

Project Updates/Discussion items:

#### Introduction – Dan Marckel

- Dan began the meeting by giving a general overview and brief history of the Como Regional Park Advisory Committee for the two new attending members from District 10, Jenny Larson and Richard Herriges. Discussed were various projects and opportunities for input the advisory committee has had over the last several years, including; Como Lakeside Pavilion/Dockside changes, Como Golf contract, transportation improvements, activities and services in the park and general information sharing

#### Como Lakeside Happenings/Update – Paul Prior, Parks Special Services

- Paul provided a general summary and status update on various items around the lake and in the park. Included is a bulleted list Paul reviewed at the meeting, with notes in red regarding items that had additional discussion/questions from the committee.
- *Como Dockside: (Dan Marckel asked for any potential information that would be available by the September meeting from Como Dockside that would help the committee review the performance metrics that will be presented by Como Dockside at the Nov. meeting)*
  - *New patio grill in addition to café window.*
  - *Two new Como Lake docks at Como Park Lakeside Pavilion patio level.*
  - *Issue – Bicycles chained to Promenade gates. Parks and Recreation working with Como Dockside to install additional bicycle racks near Como Park Lakeside Pavilion.*
  - *New Promenade sound system installed (spring 2016). Partially funded by STAR Grant.*
  - *New Promenade concession counter installed (spring 2016). More efficient food/beverage service on Promenade.*
  - *Little Box Sauna was located between Como Park Lakeside Pavilion and Hamm Falls February 5 through March 11, 2016.*
- *Wheel Fun Rentals:*
  - *Bicycle and watercraft weekend rentals at Como Lake began May 20/12. Daily rentals began Memorial Day weekend.*
  - *Como Dockside has over 100 events scheduled on the Como Park Lakeside Pavilion Promenade during 2016 summer.*



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- *Wheel Fun Rentals has 24/7 equipment repairs service.*
- *Nice Ride Rentals: (Committee was interested in any performance stats from how the rentals are doing and what type of use they receive compared to other locations)*
  - *Nice Ride bicycle rentals are located just to the south of Hamm Falls along the wheel conveyance path.*
  - *Nice Ride bicycle rentals (and Wheel Fun Rentals) bicycles were heavily used during Memorial Day weekend with no reported incidents or accidents.*
- *Como Lake:*
  - *June 20-24, 2016 – Como Lake weed harvesting – primarily around fishing dock (south end of lake), and Como Park Lakeside Pavilion patio.*
  - *Minnesota Department of Natural Resources fishing/angler cameras installed around Como Lake to observe and document fishing patterns on Como Lake. One fishing/angler camera will be located atop the Como Park Lakeside Pavilion. All battery operated.*
  - *Ramsey County placed two lake aerators on Como Lake (November 2015 to March 2016). Como Park Lakeside Pavilion provides electricity, which is reimbursed back to the City of Saint Paul and Como Dockside.*

#### **J4 – Hmong Freedom and International Sports Festival – Karin Misiewicz, Parks Operations**

- Karin gave a general update about the upcoming events and steps being taken by staff to reduce the impact to the surrounding neighborhood as much as possible. Karin talked about continuing the successful trash mitigation plan by placing barrels in various neighborhood locations during the event and continuing the fencing that has helped keep a lot of trash from getting outside the event boundary. Karin also highlighted a change regarding the beer garden being relocated to the northern event boundary with a new music stage. The committee discussed and expressed feedback about how trash has been reduced, noise hasn't been as big of issue, and efforts to expand the event to include all populations have been more successful in recent years. Karin highlighted that the streets will be closed beginning June 30, with vendor load-in happening on July 1, and the event happening July 2 & 3. Clean-up and load-out will occur on July 4. Similar to past years, the pool will be closed during the event with the event paying the city for its closure.

#### **Updates: Brad Meyer**

1. Transportation improvements update (Como Campus & McMurray) – The following update was provided regarding the transportation improvement work occurring on the Como Campus and at McMurray:
  - a. *Phase II – Transportation and Access*
    - i. *Campus (More detailed update planned for end of summer/fall meeting)*
      1. *We are finalizing construction documents for bidding at the end of June/July.*
    - a. *Proposed features planned for implementation based on available funding/bids:*
      - i. *Visitor Center Forecourt Features:*
        1. *Formal Plantings using Native Cultivars*
        2. *School bus drop-off/pick-up*
        3. *Public Art*
        4. *Grand Staircase*
        5. *Site furnishings*
        6. *Lighting*
        7. *Irrigation (Connected to underground Cistern)*
      - ii. *Como Town Entry (1st Priority Alternate):*
        1. *Plantings using Native Cultivars*

2. *Seating*
3. *New Pavement*
- iii. *Carousel Walk (2nd Priority Alternate):*
  1. *Realign walk to align with south wing of Conservatory*
  2. *Relocate existing Japanese Lilac Trees*
2. *Tentative Schedule:*

a. <i>June/July 2016:</i>	<i>Project Bidding</i>
b. <i>July 8, 2016:</i>	<i>Como Public Art Presentation/Interviews</i>
c. <i>September 2016:</i>	<i>Construction Begins (After Labor Day)</i>
d. <i>November 2016:</i>	<i>Construction Ends</i>
e. <i>Spring 2017:</i>	<i>Install Public Art</i>
- ii. *McMurray*
  1. *Bid plans for the improvements around McMurray are complete and are being sent to Contract and Analysis for advertisement on June 13th. The project will be bid on July 13th and hope to start construction around the first of August.*
2. **General Zoo & Conservatory Schedule Update** – The zoo is now into its busy summer season schedule. An “all things Como” event guide that includes various events at the zoo was provided at the meeting. Additional updates were also provided for the Japanese Lantern Lighting Festival and Blooming Butterflies:
  - a. **Japanese Lantern Lighting Festival** – Due to the large attendance last year, we are expanding the footprint to accommodate the crowds and have more restrooms and food available.
  - b. **Blooming Butterflies** – Seasonal Exhibit is back, opening June 17 through Labor Day.
3. **Legislative Session Impacts** - Until we know if we have a special session, a few variables that could impact Como remain.
  - a. **Seals & Sea Lions** - no project unless there is a special session. If funded, we’d start construction next year.
  - b. **Regional Park Funding** – The final bill had a 50% reduction in funding for metro parks, but without a special session, there is no funding. There are no active projects, but future plans could be impacted/delayed if funding isn’t restored.

Other Business: Community members in attendance asked about getting a more detailed construction update for the transportation improvements scheduled to begin in early fall. Members also asked for an opportunity to provide feedback regarding summer activities in the park, including Como Town and the pool. An update on EAB and the city’s plans to address the growing infestation was also requested.

Next meeting: Tuesday, September, 13 2016